

A NEW RACE OF *ATHYMA ASURA* MOORE FROM PALAWAN ISLAND, THE PHILIPPINES (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE)

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Surprising is the development of the genus *Athyma* Westwood (Nymphalidae) in the small island of Palawan, where we could recognise nine distinct species and more than half of them are endemic to the island and the neighbouring Balabac Island.

We describe an unique race of *Athyma asura* from Palawan Island. The species is distributed from Himalaya to south China and southwards to the Malaysian subregion, but has not hitherto been found in Palawan Island.

Athyma asura divina ssp. nov. (Figs. 1-4)

♂. Upperside brownish black with white markings as usual in the genus, except that the forewing cell-streak is obsolescent and the hindwing has brownish white spots comprising the postdiscal band black-centred. Underside light chestnut brown with some blackish patches. White markings as in upperside, but in forewing cell-streak and spot beyond it clearly defined, and in hindwing subbasal streak and postdiscal band broad and white, and series of black cuneiform spots proximal to postdiscal band present. Forewing length 34 mm.

♀. Upperside and underside similar to those of male, but all markings broader and more clearly defined. Both wings broader and more rounded. Forewing length 35 mm.

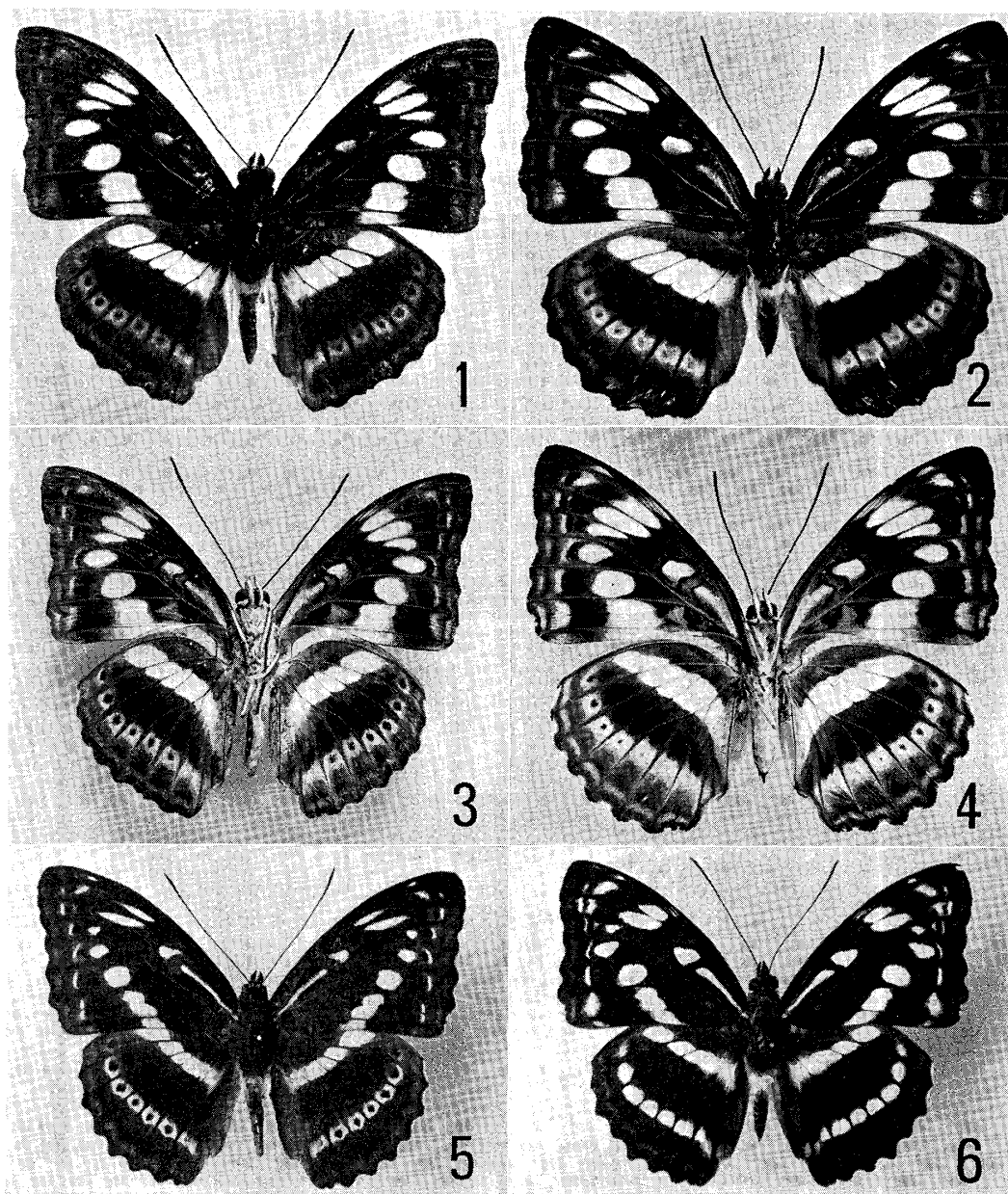
Holotype ♂, Palawan, Langan, no further data. Paratype ♀, Palawan, Irawan, no further data. All in the personal collection of one of us (T.N.).

This new subspecies is quite unique in its appearance and can be separable from any other races of the species at a glance. It may be distinguished from the northern or continental races, represented by ssp. *asuar* Moore from North India (fig. 5) by the cell-streak in the forewing and the postdiscal band in the hindwing equally obsolescent on upperside. From the Malaysian race, represented by ssp. *anaka* Fruhstorfer from Borneo (fig. 6), it can be separated by the presence of black spots in postdiscal band on the hindwing.

The important characters of the new subspecies are: 1) Upperside forewing with the cell-streak obsolescent in the male. 2) Upperside hindwing with the postdiscal band not clearly defined, but black-centred as in the continental or northern races. 3) Both wings with the median white band very broad, probably broadest of all *asura* races. 4) Forewing with the white spot in space 3 out of line with the spots in spaces 2 and 4, the feature being common to the Malaysian race. 5) Upperside forewing with the submarginal fascia brownish. 6) Underside hindwing with series of black cuneiform spots proximal to the postdiscal band very conspicuous.

It is of interest that the new subspecies seems to be very closely allied to the continental or northern races (fig. 5) in having the above character 2), whereas at the same time it approaches the Malaysian race as regards to the above character 4). But the connection with the latter is not likely, for it is surprisingly different from the North Bornean race (fig. 6). If the species *asura* had reached Palawan from the Asiatic mainland by way of South China, Formosa and Luzon (a rare case in butterflies), there would be some possibility of finding the species in the Philippines proper, especially in the mountain areas of Luzon.

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Figs. 1-6. *Athuma asura* Moore; (3, 4) underside: (1, 3) *A. a. divina* ssp. nov., ♂; (2, 4) ditto, ♀; (5) *A. a. asura* Moore (North India); (6) *A. a. anaka* Fruhstorfer (North Borneo).